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Director of Central Intelligence

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**CHINA: Reformer's Death Triggers Demonstrations**

The death of former Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang has become a rallying point for the largest demonstrations since late 1986, when students demanding more democracy contributed to Hu's downfall. Hundreds of students gathered on Beijing campuses to read illegal posters mourning Hu and calling for greater freedom. Leading dissident intellectuals, including Fang Lizhi, criticized the party's treatment of intellectuals since the ouster of Hu, their longtime protector, as party chief in 1987. [redacted]

**Comment:** Hu's death removes one of the few remaining advocates of aggressive reform from the top echelons of China's leadership. Although his power was diminished, he retained a popular following and may have been important behind the scenes in attempts to bolster reformers' position in the face of economic retrenchment. Continued student demonstrations may further polarize the political situation and give hardliners a pretext to crack down on trends they already find worrisome. Hu's departure will probably intensify the political jockeying by underscoring the mortality of other aging leaders, especially Deng Xiaoping—Hu's senior by 10 years. [redacted]

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